

In the United States Court of Federal Claims

OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

No. 21-18V

(not to be published)

CRISTINA HOUY,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

Chief Special Master Corcoran

Filed: May 23, 2023

Special Processing Unit (SPU);
Attorney's Fees and Costs

Bruce William Slane, Law Office of Bruce W. Slane, P.C., White Plains, NY, for Petitioner.

Alexa Roggenkamp, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for Respondent.

DECISION ON ATTORNEY'S FEES AND COSTS¹

On January 4, 2021, Cristina Houy filed a petition for compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. §300aa-10, *et seq.*² (the "Vaccine Act"). Petitioner alleges that she suffered a shoulder injury related to vaccine administration caused by an influenza vaccine administered on November 5, 2018. Petition at 1. On November 9, 2022, I issued a decision awarding compensation to Petitioner based on the parties' stipulation. ECF No. 41.

Petitioner has now filed a motion for attorney's fees and costs, requesting a total award of \$32,349.97 (representing \$29,511.15 in fees and \$2,838.82 in costs). Petitioner's Request for Attorney's Fees ("Motion") filed Mar. 28, 2023, ECF No. 46. In

¹ In accordance with Vaccine Rule 18(b), Petitioner has 14 days to identify and move to redact medical or other information, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy. If, upon review, I agree that the identified material fits within this definition, I will redact such material from public access.

² National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755. Hereinafter, for ease of citation, all section references to the Vaccine Act will be to the pertinent subparagraph of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa (2018).

accordance with General Order No. 9, Petitioner filed a signed statement indicating that she incurred no out-of-pocket expenses. ECF No. 46-3.

On Mar. 31, 2023, Respondent reacted to the motion, indicating that he is satisfied that the statutory requirements for an award of attorney's fees and costs are met in this case, but deferring resolution of the amount to be awarded to my discretion. ECF No. 47. Petitioner did not file a reply thereafter.

I have reviewed the billing records submitted with Petitioner's request. In my experience, the request appears reasonable, and I find no cause to reduce the requested hours or rates.

Petitioner has requested the hourly rate of \$425 for work performed by Bruce Slane in 2023 - representing a rate increase of \$25. *Id.* at 2. Additionally, Petitioner requests hourly rates for work performed by paralegals in 2023 as follows: \$182 for his paralegal Maxwell Hawkins; and \$170 for his paralegal Brittany Fernandez. *Id.* at 2. I find these hourly rates to be reasonable and will award the attorney's fees requested.

Furthermore, Petitioner has provided supporting documentation for all claimed costs. Attachment to Motion at 37-116. And Respondent offered no specific objection to the rates or amounts sought.

The Vaccine Act permits an award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs for successful claimants. Section 15(e). Accordingly, I hereby GRANT Petitioner's Motion for attorney's fees and costs. I award a total of **\$32,349.97 (representing \$29,511.15 in fees and \$2,838.82 in costs) as a lump sum in the form of a check jointly payable to Petitioner and Petitioner's counsel, Bruce W. Slane.** In the absence of a timely-filed motion for review (see Appendix B to the Rules of the Court), the Clerk of Court shall enter judgment in accordance with this Decision.³

IT IS SO ORDERED.

s/Brian H. Corcoran
Brian H. Corcoran
Chief Special Master

³ Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), the parties may expedite entry of judgment by filing a joint notice renouncing their right to seek review.